

ALBERT E. HASTINGS (1973)
(1902-1965)

Sadly, as is so often true, we know very little about this member of the Soaring Hall of Fame. We tend to think of our own ambitions and successes, certainly worthwhile. We love the sport; we want to do our best. However, our successes and accomplishments rest on the shoulders of those who came before us.

Consider for a moment Al Hastings. Who was he? What did he accomplish? What do these early pioneers mean to us? Why should we care?

We should care because the sport we love today exists due to the triumphs and accomplishments of those who came before us. Al Hastings is one such person.

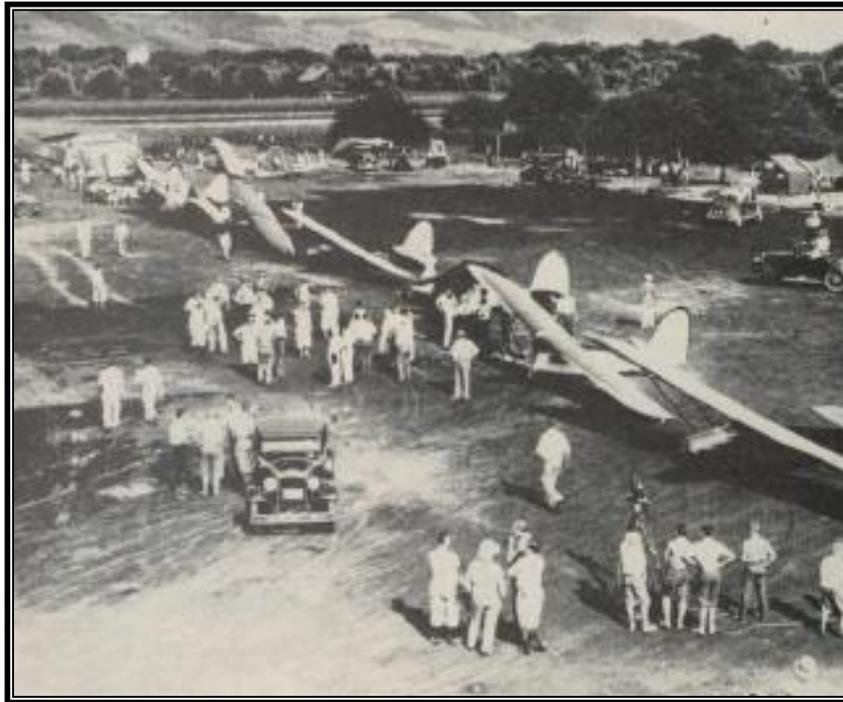


Think back to 1930. Soaring was still called gliding as pilots of gliders could scarcely maintain flight. Aviation itself was still in its infancy. Yet the Franklin Glider PS-2 had been designed – perhaps before its time considering what a short time had elapsed since mankind initially ventured into the air. The pioneers at Elmira scheduled the first National Competition.

Al Hastings flew this contest in a Franklin PS-2. He won the contest with achievements of 21 miles and an altitude of 2,128 feet. Hardly an accomplishment these days but worthy of the Evans Trophy in 1930. Edward S. Evans had been an early patron of the sport and founder of the National Glider Association – forerunner to the Soaring Society of America. The first two national competitions were held under his auspices at Elmira, NY. Albert E. Hastings was awarded the Evans Trophy as the champion of the first National Soaring Contest.

He repeated this accomplishment again the following year in 1931 at Elmira with a distance flight of 15 miles, altitude of 3,130 feet and a duration of seven hours and thirty minutes. For the second time, he was declared the United States National Champion and was again awarded the Evans Trophy.

Hastings was active in the military glider training program in World War II. He visited a post-war competition in 1947 but not as a contestant. He flew in a CAP airplane. Later he was instrumental in the founding of the El Paso Soaring Association. He visited the National Contest at Odessa, TX in 1960 and thereafter maintained his interest in soaring and membership in SSA.



The scene at the Second National contest 1931 at the old Canton Ave. Airport of
Elmira, New York
Note vintage aircraft, automobiles, etc.
Acme Photo



FIRST USA NATIONAL SOARING CHAMPION
Albert Hastings
1930-31